593 343 Polygamists as well as some monogamists have a kind of shed where they receive their friends, take care of their affairs, eat their meals, etc. (1)

1. Such a shed is called esamba by the Bombwanja, ingómba by the other tribes. The Beloko, like the Ntómbá and Bolóngé located between the Congo and the Boloko, say bongómbo. The Ekonda say ewánga.

[626] A man who is frequently found in the kitchen or who likes to rest there is the butt of ridicule by both men and women. He is called ikúmbelinga (derived from bolinga, "smoke," and kúmba, "to dodge; to turn the head away in order to protect the eyes against smoke").

2. Illness

593 758 A wife is required to nurse her husband if he is ill, together with his other wives if he is polygamous and, in case of serious illness, with the aid of his female relatives (mother, sisters). Even if they are married and living at a distance, they come to take care of a brother or son; it behooves their husbands to be reasonable and not to try and forbid their absence or prevent this exercise of their duty, for otherwise a man runs a great risk of seeing his wife leave him for good, outraged by this demonstration of his lack of affection for her family.

Together the wives and relatives seek medications and prepare the appropriate potions.

When a wife is ill the husband's female relatives usually come to see her, console her, and administer what care they are capable of giving; as a rule they are well disposed toward the wife of their son, brother, etc. The husband, for his part, must seek medications and help his sick wife. I recall a great palaver apropos of this question. During the illness of his wife Efetsí, a certain Bokangá continuously had relations in his hut with another woman. The matter became public. The guilty husband was

593 758 required to re-establish peace and harmony by means of a considerable bɔ́ndo, for having failed to take care of his wife and for having shown complete thoughtlessness and indifference.

593 758 672 If the illness becomes prolonged or serious, neither the husband nor his relatives have the leisure to nurse or take care of her. To remedy this situation and at the same time give the woman's parents the satisfaction of being able to help their daughter themselves, the husband sends her to them. He takes her there himself or calls them to come and get her. He communicates the news by sending his ndonga who bears a token payment (ndanga, loákako) such as a knife, a copper ring, etc. This ndanga is a pledge, evidence for the family that their daughter was ill on arrival and did not acquire her infirmity while with them. Without this pledge they would not want to take her; they would prefer to treat her in her husband's home. Or if the husband were to send her home without a ndanga, they would call the ndonga to witness this infraction of the rules. Or the fact that the husband has done this might be considered as a repudiation of his wife, pure and simple. In any case the husband would be in the wrong, and under these conditions the legal responsibility for his wife's death would fall entirely on him (see Chapter IX, Article X).

593 758 When the wife is cured, her parents send a message to their son-in-law to urge him to come and take his wife back.

Even if they have not been invited by the husband, the wife's parents come to see their daughter when they hear of her illness [268] in order to take her away with them and care for her. She usually follows them, but she is not required to do so since she belongs to her husband. People even cite the names of women who despite the insistence of their families did not want to be cared for at home, but have preferred to die in their husband's arms, so to speak. Among them were Bolúmbú w'ɔ́kofo of Bombénga w'ɔ́kenda (Besombó) married to Iembe y'ilongo of Engónjó; Baleko of Nsekɛ́ married to Eanga ɛ́ɛ́ Jatú of Nkɛ́lengo; Iombe of Bosáá married to Bokúlúmbwá of Iálá; Balengola of Ntómbá (Bombwanja) married to Lompoko of Mbelɛ́; Mpémbɛ́ of Bonganda (Bonkoso) married to Imbamba of Bonjoku;

593 Efala of Longa married to Ifolí of Bokényola (Bonjoku); Basásé of
758 Mbelé married to Nkengo of Litúli.

If the woman went to her family in good health and contracted an infirmity there, her parents are responsible for it. They are obliged to nurse her and to assume all the expenses due to her treatment. After she is cured they send her back with a quantity of nkomí for her husband. Usually the matter ends there. If relations between the two families are not very good, however, the husband will claim an indemnity, which varies with the situation and to which he is entitled even if he does not claim it.

This stipulation of the law holds even if the woman has gone to see her mother, father, etc., at the time of an illness or for any other reason.

It does not hold, on the other hand, if the wife has been ordered to go to her parents by her husband, or if she has fled the home shared with her husband because of ill treatment or of serious failings on his part; this point will be explained below in number 3. In such cases the husband is legally responsible for the illness.

Certain situations may arise which are intermediate to the ones discussed. Thus, for example, a wife may make a visit on her own initiative [269] but for her husband's good. Theoretically, he should win the case. Note, finally, that a stay of only twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to make responsibility for an illness fall on the wife's family.

178 Colonization has produced an entirely new situation.
595 Colonial law has given the extra wives of polygamists the freedom
758 to go to a mission in order to be instructed in the Christian religion
672 and to contract a monogamous marriage (provided the customary
797 rules governing the dissolution of marriages are observed). Such a woman may fall ill at the mission. If her illness has no troublesome consequences, it does not result in a dispute. But if the illness becomes chronic and in some way detrimental to the abandoned spouse, it may do so.

The polygamists declare that they are free of any responsibility, which they place on the woman's family. But the family has

178 nothing to do with it; it is unjust to bring them into the matter.
585x Since this legislation is intended to combat polygamy, it is natural
758 that the polygamous husband be the one who suffers from it.
672 The following is a recent example of this situation: Mbɔ́yɔ́
797 Julienne, sister of Botúna Jean of Balondɔ́, married to a polygamist by the name of Insílo of Bokenyola (Bonjoku), went to Bokuma Mission, where she contracted an incurable illness. (1) Because of her

> 1. It was a sort of illness with nervous symptoms. From a scientific viewpoint, it is more than likely that she had this illness before her arrival at the mission, although it was only manifested there. But the natives do not make this distinction, so it is not relevant to our topic.

illness she found it impossible to remarry. She therefore left the mission but was no longer accepted by the husband she had lived with so that she had to live in her brother's home. Insílo insisted that her brother reimburse him for the bride price, maintaining that in going to the mission, the woman had divorced him; his real reason, however, [270] was that she had become unfit to fulfill the duties of a wife. Since Mbɔ́yɔ́ did not fall ill in his home, he held her family responsible.

593x 3. Abandonment of the home shared by the couple
586x In the case of serious failings on the part of a husband, a woman's usual weapon is to leave their common home and return to her father's house. If the reason for her flight is serious, it is up to the husband to go and bring her back. She will not return on her own initiative. If he refuses to make the first step, he will be accused as much by public opinion as by his parents-in-law of not loving his wife, and a rupture will become inevitable. It is therefore his duty to go to his wife's parents. They will ask him to explain the situation. The wife, too, will say what she thinks. The parents will settle their difference. Whether or not the ndonga is present will depend on the

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
586 man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.
583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
178 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.